



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
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Ventura, CA 93009

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VENTURA SUPERIOR COURT RECEIVES AWARD HONORING HOMELESS COURT

The Ventura Superior Court's Homeless Court has been selected to receive the Ralph N. Kleps Award for Improvement in Administration of the Courts. The award recognizes innovation in the courts and is presented annually by the California Judicial Council, the policymaking body for the state's courts.

Homeless Court is a combined effort between the court and the community to help homeless people pay their fines for minor violations through community service. The program is unique in that it works in cooperation with a large number of social service agencies that provide advocacy or assistance to the homeless.

Special court sessions are held at homeless advocacy locations serving areas of the county most impacted by homelessness. Mental health professionals operating under an Assembly Bill 2034 grant assist the program in providing special housing referrals and access to medical attention for those with mental health needs.

Superior Court Judge John Dobroth, the principal proponent behind the creation of Homeless Court in Ventura County, noted that the value of the program is that it addresses several different problems. He explained that it can reduce the number of people living on the street, increase the number getting help through social service agencies, help the homeless person become independent of their financial situation, assist the community by performing useful work, and help the court close outstanding cases.

He added that Homeless Court achieves its intended results while still requiring the person to accept responsibility for their acts. “When you add it all up, it’s a perfect use of existing resources,” Dobroth said.

Created in honor of the first administrative director of the California Courts, programs nominated for the Kleps Award are judged on innovation, the ability to be replicated in other courts, and their reflection of the intent of at least one of the Judicial Council’s Long-Range Strategic Plan goals. Those goals include Access, Fairness and Diversity; Independence and Accountability; Modernization; Quality of Justice and Service to the Public; Education; and Technology.

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